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The Iowa Ornithologists' Union was organized at Ames, Iowa, February 28, 1923, for the study and protection of native birds and to promote fraternal relations among Iowa bird students.

The central design of the Union's official seal is the Eastern Goldfinch, designated State Bird of Iowa in 1933.

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EDITORIAL AND PUBLICATION OFFICE
WINTHROP, IOWA



UPLAND PLOVER (*Bartramia longicauda*)
From a painting by Earnest W. Steffen

FORMER ABUNDANCE AND PRESENT STATUS OF THE UPLAND PLOVER IN IOWA:

A COOPERATIVE STUDY

Prepared by WOODWARD H. BROWN

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 DES MOINES, IOWA

Few birds have captured the affections of writers as has the Upland Plover. Forbush said, "The tale of the destruction of this lovely bird is a sad one." Coues wrote: "A fine game bird; but those who only know it when its fears are excited by incessant persecution have little idea what a gentle and confiding creature it is." Bent refers to it as "this gentle and lovely bird." Anderson also used the terms "gentle and confiding."

According to most authors, the bird's charm is due for the most part to its voice. Coues describes its call as "a very loud, prolonged cry, sounding more like the whistling of the wind than a bird's voice . . . It is, I think one of the most remarkable outcries I ever heard." Roberts says: "One of the most fascinating and thrilling sounds in nature is the long-drawn, melodious quai-le-e-e cry of this bird, coming from far out over the prairie - a sweet, tremulous whistle." In Bent's Life Histories, Fred J. Pierce graphically describes the courtship flight song in this manner: "First there are a few notes sounding like water gurgling from a large bottle, then comes the loud 'Whip-whew-ee-you,' long drawn out and weirdly thrilling."

CLASSIFICATION AND ECOLOGY

The Upland Plover, *Bartramia longicauda*, despite its common name, is not included with the true plovers, Semipalmated, Piping, American Golden, and Black-bellied, in the family *Charadriidae*. It is, instead, in the sub-family *Tringinae*: Curlews, Yellowlegs, and allies, of the family *Scolopacidae*: Woodcock, Snipe, and Sandpipers, of which the better-known species in this area are the Spotted and Solitary Sandpipers, Willet, and Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs.

To quote H. K. Job in 'Birds of America': "Classing it as a 'shore-bird' is only on the basis of structure and relationship, for otherwise there is no bird which is less fond of the vicinity of water." As Ellison Orr put it: "By the knowing ones he was classified as a 'shore-bird', but like the girl in the old rhyme who went out to swim and hung her clothes on a hickory limb, he 'never went near the water'."

Bent says: "It is a sandpiper truly enough, but one that has adopted the haunts and many of the habits of the plovers. . . It is a characteristic bird of the prairies and wide open grassy fields." Most writers and present-day observers agree that pastures and grasslands are the favored nesting sites, although Bent quotes W. B. Barrows as saying that: "in Michigan, it frequently nests in wet grounds, although the nest itself is usually placed in one of the drier spots. We have seen the bird nesting in two instances . . . where the mud was ankle deep and dry spots few and far between." Also William Youngworth (1947) observed: "The Upland Plover is a bird of the prairies and is usually associated with water, although not in all cases. However, we usually find them in the prairie grass near some slough, lake, or in a pasture or hayfield with a small stream coursing through it." Roberts' comment was that "it rarely seeks the lake shore or mud flat, finding its food among the insects of the upland." Forbush described it as "an indefatigable insect hunter, living on such insects as grass-eating caterpillars and grasshoppers." J. Donald Gillaspey of Lamoni has noticed they seem to prefer well drained locations, particularly fields in which the growth is not too rank. Meadows

and pastures of blue grass, brome grass, or timothy seem more desirable than heavy growths of clover or alfalfa.

FORMER ABUNDANCE

Roberts wrote, "Sixty years ago it was present all through the summer everywhere (in Minnesota) in countless thousands." Iowa, being closer to the southern limit of its nesting range, doubtless had a smaller summer population than was the case in Minnesota. By 1907 Anderson described it as a tolerably common summer resident in most parts of the state, more frequent in migrations.

Indiscriminate shooting and market hunting depleted the numbers of the Upland Plover in the middle west to the extent that there were grave doubts whether the species would survive, or if it would go the way of the Passenger Pigeon. Dr. George H. Lowery adds: "There is an old French idea that those who eat the flesh of this bird are imbued with extraordinary amatory prowess. Possibly this belief, coupled with the delicacy of its flesh, is the reason why the *papabotte* (its French name in Louisiana) was once killed in such numbers. The timely passage by Congress of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, in 1918, was the salvation of this and many other shore birds."

Earnest W. Steffen, telling of earlier days in Grundy County (in litt.) said that from 1898 to 1903, Upland Plovers were as plentiful as Meadowlarks, and one could see four or five in a half mile. There were five or six pairs on 160 acres. In 1904 he noticed a decrease, and by 1910 an observation was worthy of comment. By 1915 there was none in the area, and none was seen through 1928.

According to Dr. J. Harold Ennis, it appears from his records and those of Dr. Chas. R. Keyes that this species, though widely distributed, was rare during the 1920's and 1930's.

Fred J. Pierce remembers that in the 1920's the plover was frequently heard in the spring, and nested quite commonly around Winthrop. At that time much of the territory was untilled, wet land.

Mrs. H. R. Peasley of Des Moines recalls that in the late 1930's or early 40's plovers were fairly common nesters in an area just north of town. This area which was then prairie or meadowland has either been put into cultivation or sub-divided with the result that there are no longer plovers to be seen.

By 1933 the plight of the Upland Plover had evidently attracted the attention of the membership of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union as George O. Hendrickson, in "A Note from Our President" reported: "Other members are watching Woodcocks, Upland Plovers, and their near relatives which we are particularly desirous of saving." The over-all picture had apparently not improved appreciably by 1939, as C. W. Price, at the Spirit Lake convention, talked on "Birds abundant 50 years ago, and now scarce or extinct - Passenger Pigeon, Sandhill Crane, Long-billed Curlew, Golden and Upland Plovers, Canada Goose, Loon and Cormorant." Numerous references to the Upland Plover, in addition to the foregoing, are found in Iowa Bird Life. Excerpts from these follow chronologically by sections.

NORTHWEST. Clay and Palo Alto counties: L. J. Bennett saw several hundred on May 6 and May 18, 1933.

William Youngworth in 1944 said plovers were found less frequently on each trip. Breaking up virgin prairie, prairie fires, drought and overpasturing were contributing causes. In 1949, writing on the status of the plover in the upper Missouri Valley, he remarked the spring of 1947 was unusually wet and cool, and resulted in pools of water where none had been for several years, and heavier growths of grass. These caused the plovers to come back to areas from which they had been absent for years. He believed with favorable conditions the species tends to spread out, but on the whole it is

losing out in numbers. In 1951 plovers were found around Peterson and Sioux Rapids where they had not been seen for many years. Evidently one pair was trying in 1958 to reestablish after many years' absence, in Woodbury County.

NORTHEAST. On a trip to the Hayden Prairie and Giard, Youngworth was surprised how often he saw Upland Plover in northeast Iowa (1954).

CENTRAL. Henry Birkeland in Story County reported more Upland Plovers than usual in May and June, 1933. In 1934, from May 6 to June 17, a pair was seen nearly every time he was afield. In 1936 he observed them on 31 days from May 6 to August 26.

EAST-CENTRAL. Fayette, Floyd and Black Hawk counties. R. M. Hays saw an unusual number in the spring and summer of 1955.

Muscatine County. Lillian Serbousek reported that plovers had nested in the area west of North Liberty for several years (1956).

Johnson County. In 1954 Fred Kent saw plovers at Swan Lake weekly from the third week in April through August. In 1957 Fred Kent and Dr. Robert Vane found the plover near Iowa City as usual.

Scott County. Richard Schaefer of Davenport said he had numerous records in 1949, although he classified it as a rare migrant in previous years. Thomas Morrissey, in 1950, said the plover could be found feeding in short grass pastures in the valley of the Wapsipinicon up the river from Davenport. James Hodges, in 1953, stated the Upland Plover was one of two species which had re-established themselves. They were nesting in eight different areas in the county in the last five years. He said that 50 years ago they were rather common, but declined beginning about 1935. They seemed to increase each year.

SOUTH-CENTRAL. Decatur County. Mrs. W. C. DeLong, in 1951, said Upland Plovers nested every summer in their pasture near Lamoni. J. Donald Gillaspey, also residing near Lamoni, during the summer of 1956 saw or heard plovers in his immediate area every day from before May 1 until after September 1. Twelve were seen together on July 30. In May, 1957, he saw 10 in his pasture, and on July 15, 14 in the same field.

SOUTHEAST. Van Buren County. Wilfred D. Crabb of Salix reported this species had been comparatively numerous at Stockport in the spring and summer of 1939. He had been observing 10 sections of flat, tiled tableland, and found one or two pairs per section.

Robert B. Wallace of Ames had been traveling the eastern two-thirds of the state in the summer of 1939, and found them common in many localities in southern Iowa. They were apparently nesting in grass fields in areas of cultivation.

Henry County. Roy Ollivier found a nest in a pasture in May, 1951.

PRESENT STATUS

Inquiries were directed to a number of the members of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union. They were asked for their opinions regarding past abundance and present status of the Upland Plover. The replies which were received are grouped geographically.

NORTHWEST. Myrle Jones, Ft. Defiance State Park: "See it in migration every year, never more than four at a time. A 60-square-mile area east of the park to the Des Moines River, and west between Highway 9 and Spirit Lake consists of rolling hills heavily pastured. A guess is that five or ten pairs nest there." He quotes Harold Johnson, Game Warden at Estherville, as saying each decade sees a decrease in numbers, and the decline was especially noticed in the past two or three years.

B. O. Wolden, Estherville, says: It has not been common during my memory. I saw it most frequently during the 1920's, 30's and 40's. It used to nest in the favored areas. Many of these areas are now in cultivation."



EARNEST W. STEFFEN

The man who has furnished so many drawings for Iowa Bird Life. The second of his colored plates appears in this issue. We are indebted to him for both painting the picture and paying the cost of its reproduction. Mr. Steffen lives at 1600 Maplewood Drive, Cedar Rapids, Iowa. (Cedar Rapids 'Gazette' photograph)

James G. Sieh, Spirit Lake: "Can be found in most suitable habitat, but this has largely disappeared." He thinks there has been an increase within the past ten years, but the present status or trend is not clear.

William Youngworth, Sioux City: "The Upland Plover has about gone from western Iowa as a breeding bird. Occasional pairs are to be found north and east of Sioux City, with numbers increasing a bit in the Iowa lakes region."

NORTHEAST. O. P. Allert, Giard, (Clayton County), describes that area as being on the edge of the timber belt. He has records in only 12 of the years from 1923 to 1958, and in only three years, 1949 being the latest, were they nesting.

CENTRAL. A. J. Englehorn, Ames, recorded the species each year since 1948 with the exception of 1952 and 1955. "It seems to me this bird has always been quite rare." He is of the opinion they have had a nesting pair on the Agronomy Farm north of Ames once or twice during the past several years.

Jim Keenan, of Ogden, has had a pair or two in his pasture every year since 1944. He blames overcropping by stock and weed-spraying for the lack of nesting areas.

The writer has seen this species only twice in this part of the State, and the Polk County Check-list shows only three dates reported in the past 20 years.

EAST-CENTRAL. Earnest W. Steffen, Cedar Rapids: "I can attest to the scarcity of Upland Plovers in this area . . . we travel the road between here and Winthrop rather often. At no time have we ever seen an Upland Plover, although there seems to be the right kind of habitat along this road. Intensified farming and the consequent reduction of nesting habitat was the cause of the reduction in Upland Plover population."

Fred W. Kent, Iowa City: "For the past ten years found regularly in an area some 10 miles northwest of Iowa City in established pastures at the edge of the Iowa River flood-plain. One quarter-section of permanent pasture has had from one to four nesting pairs every year. Another area some miles away also had regular residents until it was drained and put into corn. So, in the past three years there has been a reduction in the number of birds. From this I would assume that in last few years with the marked increase in corn acreage there is some reduction in numbers of Upland Plovers."

C. Esther Copp, Wheatland: "In 1958, I counted nine, the highest number seen at one time. In spite of that, I assume the number is decreasing since so much meadow land has become cornfields."

Lillian Serbousek, Cedar Rapids: "My records show at least one each year from 1940 to 1959. In 1959 I saw only one pair in migration. Generally, I see these into summer."

Dr. Robert F. Vane, Cedar Rapids, comments that nearly all the land around that city is tilled without much suitable habitat. Most of the suitable areas have had plovers for 20 years, and still have them.

George Faulkner, Waterloo: "I never see very many, but I hardly ever miss seeing at least one pair. I believe they are fewer in Iowa because so many sloughs and wet meadows where they nest have been drained."

C. W. Robertson, also of Waterloo, has a divergent opinion. "I cannot see that they are on the decrease here as noted elsewhere. We have a good deal of wet meadows in this area." (Upland Plovers around Waterloo evidently prefer the less dry locations.)

George Crossley, of Farley, wrote: "Normally I have only one, two, or three individuals per year. In the spring of 1959 we saw six or seven in a field with numerous Golden Plovers on May 8. So far as I know, all records have been of migrants."

Emmett Polder, Dyersville: "Before 1946 I used to see at least eight pairs along a 7 mile route from Dyersville to Worthington. In 1947 an 80-acre slough was drained and put under cultivation, and the adjoining upland pasture either plowed or overgrazed. Another farm was also put under close cultivation, and this, with maximum grazing and fence-row spraying, has resulted in only three or four pairs being seen recently."

Peter Petersen, Jr. writes from Davenport that he would classify the plover as a rare migrant and very rare summer resident in Scott County 10 years ago. Based upon his observations, and those of Lewis Blevins, he feels it would be possible now to find two or three times the number to be found only four or five years ago. According to the location of his observations, there has been a spread to the south and west from the north-central portion of the county.

SOUTHWEST. Mrs. Frances C. Bordner, of Shenandoah, writes that she has seen but one plover there since 1948. Mrs. W. C. DeLong has seen none in the Shenandoah area.

SOUTH-CENTRAL. J. Donald Gillaspey, of Lamoni, thinks plovers have been more numerous during the last five years than previously, and has recorded them regularly from mid-April through late September. They were seen as late as October 3 in 1956. He has also checked with a number of other residents in the area, and they also find the birds regularly.

SOUTHEAST. M. E. Stempel, Ottumwa, while checking calling quail along a 9-mile gravel route, had an opportunity to observe Upland Plovers as well. The records which he furnished are inconclusive as far as showing a trend is concerned. Mrs. Orville T. Upp, also of Ottumwa, has made daily trips over various roads in Wapello County, and has kept bird records since 1951. She has noticed a definite falling-off in numbers in the last four years.

Roy Ollivier reports from Mt. Pleasant that plovers are scarcer than five years ago. Some of the places where they were seen have been destroyed by road construction, and he also feels that crop rotation is a deterrent to their nesting.

SUMMARY

The present-day situation, according to information received, may be summarized as follows:

In the Northwest the consensus is that the species, while nesting, has declined, although James G. Sieh is inclined to dissent.

The Northeast area contains much land that is not suitable nesting territory, and observations there are largely of migrants.

The Central area reports are to the effect that plovers probably can be found nesting in suitable territories which are few in number.

In the East-Central there seemed to be an increase in numbers in the late 1940's and early 1950's. Here again, they are reported as nesting in the right kind of habitat, although such areas have, for the most part, been decreasing. Scott County is the exception.

The Southwest has furnished little or no information regarding former abundance, and the reports from that section now indicate they are scarce.

The South-Central section reports plovers have nested regularly from the early 1950's, and may have increased during the last few years.

In the Southeast they were thought to be comparatively numerous or common in 1939, but the current reports range from non-committal to "scarce" and "a definite falling-off in numbers in the last four years."

No information is available from the North-Central or West-Central regions.

Jack Musgrove is of the opinion that on a nation-wide basis the plover is on the increase and mentions central Nebraska particularly. He also attributes a noticeable local decline beginning in 1940 to the decrease in acceptable habitat.

The Upland Plover seems to be a species which, while more adaptable than the Prairie Chicken, for instance, has not been able to adjust as successfully as the Meadowlark. Their falling-off in numbers in Iowa, from all accounts, may be attributed to destruction of their favored habitat. This theory has been advanced elsewhere by H. H. Beck who, in *Auk* 73:136 (1956), described counts on four tracts in Pennsylvania where he had hunted Upland Plovers prior to 1914. One tract left in grass (an airport) showed an increase from 35 in 1923, to 140 in 1954, whereas the numbers on the other tracts were the same or fewer. He is also of the opinion that the rate of production in the northern zone seems balanced by the rate of destruction in the southern zone, and cites the amount of hunting in Argentina among other wintering places.

Dr. Alexander Wetmore was quoted by Bent as saying in 1927 there was such hunting pressure in Argentina that, "It can hardly be expected to regain anywhere near its former abundance, however, with increasing encroachment on its winter and summer ranges."

It does seem that a species, now fully protected and whose habitat requirements appear easily satisfied, would have made a better recovery if undisturbed during what corresponds to our winter season.

While not necessarily pertinent to the question of abundance, it is interesting to learn that the United States Fish and Wildlife Service reports they have but one record of an Upland Plover being banded in Iowa, and no record of recovery of banded birds in this state.

The writer wishes to thank those who furnished the information which made this report possible, and is especially grateful to those who took the trouble to discuss the matter with others in their respective areas, thereby securing further data which would otherwise have been unavailable to him.

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THE HAYDEN PRAIRIE REVISITED

By J. HAROLD ENNIS

Cornell College
MOUNT VERNON, IOWA

On the afternoon of April 16, 1960, Mr. Fred Kent, Dr. Robert Vane, and I returned to the Hayden Prairie after an absence of ten months (see *Iowa Bird Life*, Vol. XXIX, No. 4, pp. 82-85). Our travel time was extended by a severe wind and rainstorm over much of the route. However, we arrived at the prairie about 7 p. m., and fortunately the rain ceased momentarily. Although the evening light was reduced, we sighted almost immediately seven Marsh Hawks hunting in the central portion of the tract. The strong wind clearly did not prevent their search for rodents, but it did insure a fine display of aerial maneuvering as these hawks "quartered" the field.

Driving along the road bordering the northern boundary of the Hayden Prairie, we paused to reexamine the hawks. In the waning light we now noted the deeper wing-strokes and tilting flight of three Short-eared Owls.

One flew toward our waiting car and alighted on the ground within 30 feet of where we sat. By 7:20 p.m., partly due to the surrounding clouds, it was too dark to make additional observations.

The next morning at Cresco we arose in astonishment to find the surrounding country covered with snow. Proceeding again to the Prairie, we saw our most dramatic avian sight about 2 miles south of the tract. At that point we saw flying in a westerly direction 51 Whistling Swans.

We slowly skirted the margin of the Prairie, but could find little evidence of bird life. Two Horned Larks in the roadway, three Flickers in flight, several Western Meadowlarks and one Eastern calling, and two Ring-necked Pheasants made up most of the list. One could not expect active or abundant bird life in mid-April with some fresh snow on the ground and a high wind blowing. Nevertheless Dr. Vane and I started across the southwest corner of the prairie tract. I had hardly left the roadway until two Short-eared Owls flushed from the dead prairie grass. Shortly thereafter, Dr. Vane called attention to three more Whistling Swans flying westward. My Iowa sight records of swans are rare, but it somehow seemed appropriate that this large white bird should be glimpsed from the little section of virgin prairie. A century or two ago certainly the wild swan flying over the midwestern prairie on a raw spring day represented a more common association. A Sparrow Hawk on a boundary fence-post and two Crows completed the prairie list of birds.

We had hoped to find the pasque flower (*Anemone patens*) on Easter, but the only floral life on the prairie appeared to be a low-growing "pussy willow." Dr. Vane did find the dried flowers of last year's closed gentian (*Gentiana andrewsii*), a plant that we had overlooked on the previous trip. Mid-April finds the Hayden Prairie largely dormant, but the early spring bird-life is suggestive of a faunal and floral rebirth.

We left the Hayden Prairie well satisfied with the time spent. As if to insure that we might return at some later date, we saw, about 5 miles south, our third view of Whistling Swans—a flock of 42 magnificent birds. A mile or two farther on, we stopped to examine a large aggregation of blackbirds, including Brewer's, Rusty, and Redwinged Blackbirds.

Certainly field naturalists may count Howard County as worthy of occasional visits.

REPORT ON THE WATERLOO CONVENTION

By MYRLE M. BURK

Secy.-Treas., Iowa Ornithologists' Union

A trip through Yellowstone Park by way of movies photographed by John Paul Moore opened the 38th annual convention of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union, May 13, at 7:30 p.m. in the Gold Room of Hotel President. Sponsors of the meeting were the members of Black Hawk County and the two affiliated societies, the Cedar Falls Audubon Society and the Waterloo Audubon Society.

Mr. Moore, who considers Yellowstone National Park the most beautiful and interesting of our national parks, did his photographing in the less frequently traveled canyons, valleys and meadows, and revealed their entrancing wonder and beauty, and the mystery of the nature of untrammelled regions. Friendly black bears begging for handouts for themselves and rollicking cubs, the suspicious and wary grizzly guarding her cubs, nimble bighorn, ungainly moose, swift pronghorn antelope, elk and shy mule deer, flocks of Sandhill Cranes and the tiny Dipper feeding on water insects, held our unvarying attention.

On Saturday morning, May 14, following a 5 o'clock breakfast, members spent three hours exploring areas suggested by Dr. Martin Grant. Six trips were arranged, each conducted by two leaders.

At 9:00 o'clock, the members convened at the beautiful Henry Grout Historical Museum for a coffee hour and the program of papers and pictures.

Mr. Evan Hultman, County Attorney of Black Hawk County, welcomed the members of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union to Waterloo, and Dr. Peter P. Laude, President, responded. During the morning the following papers were presented:

"Birds of the Waterloo-Cedar Falls Area," by Dr. Martin Grant.

"Three Ornithologists' of Distinction," by Dr. J. Harold Ennis.

"A Survey of Wintering Bald Eagles in the Mississippi Valley," by Elton Fawks, East Moline, Illinois.

The afternoon program consisted of slides or movies, presented as follows:

"A Bird's-Eye View of a Bird" (slides), by Lyle Bradley, Anoka, Minnesota.

"Nesting Birds of the Davenport Area" (movies), by Edwin Meyer, Davenport, Iowa.

"An Outline for the Organization of a Christmas Bird Count" (slides), by Peter C. Petersen, Jr., Davenport, Iowa.

Slide Fest. Various members showed slides of their favorite subjects, after which there was adjournment for the business meeting.

One hundred three members and guests attended the annual banquet at 6:30 Saturday evening in the Gold Room of Hotel President. The tables were attractively decorated with native flowers of the season and miniature birds; arrangements were designed by Miss Marguerite Reese, Waterloo, and members of the committee. Theodore Greer, guest speaker of Joy, Illinois, was introduced by Dr. Peter P. Laude. He presented, by means of slides and tapes, an interesting survey of "A Year with the Birds." He was assisted by Robert Trail, Aledo, Illinois.

In two business meetings during the convention, several important matters were taken care of. The Executive Council met at luncheon with the following members present: Dr. Peter P. Laude, Peter C. Petersen, Dr. Myrle M. Burk, Dr. J. Harold Ennis, Fred Pierce, Woodward H. Brown, Lillian Serbousek, Mrs. Darrell Hanna and John Paul Moore.

Dr. Ennis asked that the Secretary be instructed to write to the secretaries of ornithological societies of adjoining states, Illinois, Missouri, Nebraska, South Dakota, Minnesota, and Wisconsin, requesting the names of the officers of the respective organizations and submitting the names of the officers of our Union in return. This was voted on favorably, as was a proposal by Peter C. Petersen Jr., that the regular dues of the Union be raised from \$2.00 to \$3.00, beginning January 1, 1961, thereby amending article II, Section 1.

In the business meeting in late afternoon on Saturday, the various officers gave their reports. Dr. Burk read her report of the work of the Secretary-Treasurer. She reported receipts during the year (May, 1959, to May, 1960) of \$1,343.72, and expenses of \$1,394.44, with a balance on hand of \$915.29. She reported a total membership of 407; of this number 71 were new members, 22 Junior Members, 25 Supporting Members, 1 Contributing Member, 8 Honorary Members, 19, libraries, and 6 bird societies. The total figure also included 46 who had not yet paid 1960 dues, some of whom undoubtedly would be dropped.

President Laude named the following committees: Nominating, J. P. Moore, Dr. J. H. Ennis, Lillian Serbousek; Auditing, Mrs. Darrell Hanna,

(Continued on page 42)



SCENES AT THE WATERLOO CONVENTION

Fred Kent was busy with his camera as usual. The top photograph was taken on the field trip: left to right: Dr. Robert Vane, Woodward Brown and our new Vice President, Lynn Willecockson.

In the lower picture, members are gathered around the book table. Identified are: Mrs. Carl Proescholdt, Harvey Nichols, Dr. Milton Weller, Mrs. Fred Pierce, Fred Pierce, Pauline Wersbafen.



Upper photograph shows the crowd at the Sunday noon luncheon in Rotarian Reserve Park (note the row of binoculars as part of the table service!).

Lower: Mr. and Mrs. M. L. Jones, and (right) our Secretary-Treasurer, Dr. Myrle M. Burk. (F. W. Kent photographs)

Myra Willis, Esther Copp; Resolutions, Charles Ayres, Woodward Brown, Seddie Cogswell.

Dr. Harold Ennis, Librarian, reported that he had sold a set of Iowa Bird Life to the library of the University of Missouri, and had purchased a set of bound volumes from Alois Weber, Keokuk. He also reported that Mrs. Stiles and son had presented to the library of the Union the entire notes of Bruce Stiles. Through Dr. Ennis the members extend their earnest thanks for the valuable gift. These notes, kept through the years by Bruce Stiles, a man of keen observation, broad interest, and unusual intellect, will be of increasingly greater value as the natural environment of the country disappears or changes.

Editor Pierce asked the members to cooperate by sending notes and articles to him for publication. He acknowledged the work of Woodward H. Brown in editing the Iowa Christmas Bird Count, the cooperative report on the Upland Plover, and the compilation of the five-year index for Iowa Bird Life. He also cited the contributions of William Youngworth and Earnest Steffen for colored plates in the magazine.

Sunday morning, after a hearty breakfast of scrambled eggs, bacon, fried potatoes, etc., the members separated into six groups for the bird observation trips. Dr. Martin L. Grant had planned these trips so that each contained similar habitats, viz., prairie, river, pond, marsh, park, and woods. They included these interesting areas: Sage Sanctuary, Crane Creek, Wapsipinicon



DR. PAUL L. ERRINGTON, DR. HAROLD R. PEASLEY AT THE WATERLOO
CONVENTION
(F. W. Kent photograph)

River valley, Sweet Marsh, Casebeer Heights, Black Hawk Creek, Hartman Reserve, Wyth Park, Big Woods, Washington-Union Bridge.

The well-planned trips and ideal birding weather contributed to the observation of the greatest number of species of any convention; 159 species were recorded on Sunday morning, with 7 additional species seen Saturday.

Returning from the six-hour field trips at 12:30 Sunday, 95 hungry but very successful bird observers enjoyed a hearty luncheon of delicious and abundant food served by Dwight Dirksen in the Rotarian Reserve park, north of Cedar Falls.

After the luncheon, Dr. Laude called the final meeting to order and a number of matters were acted upon. The audit of the Secretary-Treasurer's records, as reported on by Mrs. Darrell Hanna, chairman of the Auditing Committee, was accepted.

J. P. Moore, chairman of the Nominating Committee, gave a list of the nominees for officers for the coming year. The Secretary was instructed to cast a unanimous ballot for these and they were elected (List of new officers given on the title page of this issue of *Iowa Bird Life*).

Charles Ayres, chairman of the Resolutions Committee, read the resolutions as drawn up by his committee.

Mr. Ayres also invited the Union to hold its 39th annual convention at Ottumwa in 1961. The invitation was formally accepted.

Miss Inez Hilton, president of the Cedar Falls Audubon Society, extended an invitation to the Iowa Ornithologists' Union to meet in Cedar Falls in 1962. The Cedar Falls Audubon Society will celebrate its 25th anniversary that year. The invitation was accepted.

Adjournment then dropped the curtain on one of our most successful meetings.

Resolutions.—Whereas the Iowa Ornithologists' Union has just concluded a most interesting and successful 38th annual convention and year, be it hereby resolved that the membership of said organization hereby express their sincere appreciation and thanks as follows:

a.) To all the officers and directors of the Grout Historical Museum of Waterloo, Iowa, and to Genevieve Woodbridge for the privilege of holding our annual meeting in their fine building.

b.) To the Waterloo Chamber of Commerce for the assistance and courtesies which helped to make our stay in Waterloo such a pleasant experience.

c.) To the National Bank of Waterloo, Iowa for their monetary assistance.

d.) To the Home Savings and Loan Association of Waterloo, Iowa, for the lovely napkins.

e.) To the officers and members of the Cedar Falls Audubon Society, the Waterloo Audubon Society, and the Black Hawk County members of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union for the time, effort and enthusiasm expended, without which this convention would not have been such a success.

f.) To Peter C. Petersen, Jr., chairman of the Program Committee, and the members of said committee, who furnished such an excellent program.

g.) To Dr. Myrle M. Burk, chairman of the Arrangements Committee, and the members of said committee, who so adequately handled the important tasks incident to the functioning of such a committee.

h.) To Theodore Greer and Robert Trail, who collaborated in presenting the fine banquet program.

i.) To Earnest W. Steffen for permitting us to enjoy his beautiful pictures.

j.) To John Paul Moore for bringing us his fine film, "Nature's Shrine, Yellowstone."

- k.) To Dr. Martin Grant for his work in arranging the field trips.
- l.) To Joe G. Sage and the Rotary Club of Waterloo, Iowa, for the use of Rotary Park free of charge Sunday afternoon.
- m.) To all the persons who gave of their time and talent in making our program so interesting and enjoyable.
- n.) To Albert Berkowitz, who again printed the program for the convention.
- o.) To Mr. and Mrs. Fred Pierce for the display of their books.
- p.) To the Cedar Rapids Bird Club and its members for furnishing us with a most interesting issue of Iowa Bird Life.
- q.) To all who furnished material for use in Iowa Bird Life.
- r.) To all the officers and members of the Executive Council of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union for their efforts, not only in making this convention a success, but for their untiring and faithful work in behalf of our organization during the entire year just passed.
- s.) To all who attended the meetings and banquet, and who participated in the field trips, thereby helping to make the convention a success.
- t.) And last but not least, may we express our deepest thanks to the Supreme Creator who has blessed us with a privilege of living in a country replete with the many wonders, which, though at times beyond our powers to understand, we nevertheless enjoy.

Attendance Register.—AMES, Dr. Paul Errington, Dr. Milton Weller; CEDAR FALLS, Gertrude Bode, Mary Bode, Madeline Carpenter, Bill Erps, Agnes Faint, Dr. and Mrs. Martin Grant, Annette Haffner, Inez Hilton, Anita Pearson, Mrs. Charles Schwanke, Maxine Schwanke, Florence Spring; CEDAR RAPIDS, Eleanor Fullerton, Dr. and Mrs. Alfred Meyer, Virginia Olson, Lillian Serbousek, Mr. and Mrs. E. W. Steffen, Dr. and Mrs. Robert Vane, Robert Vane Jr., Pauline Wershofen, Myra Willis; DAVENPORT, Edw. E. Meyer, Peter C. Petersen Jr., Mrs. Peter C. Petersen Sr., Lowell Spring; DECORAH, Mrs. Alden Bauder, Mrs. Burt Henning; DELHI, Mrs. H. G. Lincoln; DES MOINES, Mr. and Mrs. Woodward Brown, Dr. and Mrs. Harold Peasley, Lynn Willcockson; ESTHERVILLE, Mr. and Mrs. Myrle L. Jones, Gene Ulveslad; FARLEY, Mr. and Mrs. George Crossley. GRUNDY CENTER, Mrs. Harold Brown, Mrs. Eldon Hasbrook, Lavern Jontz; HAZLETON, Irene Harrington; INDEPENDENCE, Ruth Funk, Florence Kane; Mr. and Mrs. Percy Lynch; JEFFERSON, Bob Faaborg; JESUP, Mrs. Clarice Hewitt; LA PORTE CITY, Mr. and Mrs. Roy Hawkins; LEHIGH, Dean Roosa; LISCOMB, Mrs. Carl Proescholdt, Terry Proescholdt; MANLY, Miss Patt Lake; MARSHALLTOWN, Dorothy Brunner, Mrs. Helen Grimes, Mr. and Mrs. Russell Prescott, Mr. and Mrs. Homer Rinehart; NORTHWOOD, Mrs. John Bottleman, Mrs. Fred Oetken; MOUNT VERNON, Seddie Cogswell, David Ennis, Dr. Harold Ennis; NEWTON, Mr. and Mrs. J. P. Moore, Larry Moore; OELWEIN, Mr. and Mrs. Earl Alton; OTTUMWA, Mr. and Mrs. Charles C. Ayres Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Budd Hallberg; SHELL ROCK, Mrs. Clyde Pettijohn; SIGOURNEY, Mr. and Mrs. Forrest Millikin; SIOUX CITY, Mrs. Helen Barrett, Mr. and Mrs. P. B. Davison, Mr. and Mrs. Darrell Hanna, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Nickolson; VINTON, Paul Kline, WALTERLOO, Pauline Bassarear, Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Briden, Dr. Myrle M. Burk, Frank R. Crowfoot, Wanda Daum, Marie Cooney, L. E. Dawson, Dorothy Drackley, Harriet Fairbanks, Ruth Halliday, G. W. Hanuske, Helen Hawkins, Stella Hawkins, Russell Hays, Ettalee Hazlett, Maybelle Hinkley, Evan Waltman, Marvel Lesch, Pearl C. Lyon, Ella Mason, Lillian Maxwell, Maud Michael, Mrs. Len Myers, Margaret Nagel, Harvey Nichols, Mr. and Mrs. John Osness, Pearl Rader, Mrs. Eugene Reed, Marguerite Reese, Z. K. Russell, Jean Sherburne, Gwen Tomlinson, Mr. and Mrs. William Wesenauer;

WINTHROP, Mr. and Mrs. F. J. Pierce; WHEATLAND, Dolly Copp, Esther Copp; CORONA, CALIFORNIA, Dr. Mary Roberts; ALEDO, ILLINOIS, Robert Trial; EAST MOLINE, ILLINOIS, Mr. and Mrs. Elton Fawks; JOY, ILLINOIS, Ted Greer; ANOKA, MINNESOTA, Lyle Bradley; LINCOLN, NEBRASKA, Mr. and Mrs. Harold Whitmus. Total registered, 143.

A LETTER FROM PRESIDENT PETERSEN

Dear Members:

I feel very much honored to have been elected to the presidency of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union. I hope I can fill Dr. Laude's shoes and further the aims of the club.

FALL MEETING. Nothing definite has been set for a fall meeting. Many members feel that driving across the state for a picnic lunch is not worth while. Others have told me they would like to continue some sort of meeting, possibly covering the entire week-end for those from a greater distance who have time available. If it meets with the approval of others on the Executive Council I should like to organize a week-end meeting with facilities for "camping out," possibly in the beautiful wooded area of north-east Iowa.

S P R I N G CONVENTION. Many people told me they enjoyed the program at Waterloo. Every effort will be made to keep the program equally interesting and entertaining at Ottumwa. Mr. Ayres and I are already corresponding concerning the meeting and it looks as if it will be very enjoyable. I shall attempt to have a better organized netting demonstration for those interested.

INTERSTATE COOPERATION. As I am a director of the Illinois Audubon Society, I am interested in increasing cooperation between state clubs. I am a member of most of the mid-west state clubs and find their projects quite interesting. At the Illinois Audubon meeting in May I spoke with the President, Paul Downing, and we both felt that reciprocal publicity on meetings, camp-outs and field trips in the respective journals would be an easy way to begin a cooperative program. At the Wisconsin meeting in June I discussed interstate cooperation with the Wisconsin president.

STATUS OF BIRDS. Woodward Brown has been busy working on a survey of the status of Upland Plover in Iowa. This material is published in this issue. He would like to work on other species which are little known in the state, such as Yellow-crowned Night Heron, Henslow's Sparrow, etc. Anyone interested in this type of work, please write Woodward at 4815 Ingersoll Avenue, Des Moines, or write to me (620 East 30th Street, Davenport). For all members along the Mississippi River the Bald Eagle survey Elton



PETER C. PETERSEN, JR.

Fawks discussed will be in full swing next winter. All interested should contact me or Elton Fawks, Route #1, East Moline, Illinois.

MEMBERSHIP. The possibility of creating a life membership has been discussed and is presently under study by the Executive Council and officers. Any suggestions by the members would be appreciated. We are the only mid-west club without such a membership class. New members are still needed although our growth during the past year has been excellent. I hope no member feels the dues increase too great. Money from dues hasn't been enough to cover the cost of Iowa Bird Life in recent years and an increase was absolutely necessary.

If at any time any member has a question or bit of advice, I am sure all the other officers will be as happy as I to hear from you. If any of you are in Davenport, feel free to stop at the Davenport Public Museum if time permits, or at my home on Sunday or Monday.

Sincerely,

PETER C. PETERSEN, JR.

Composite List of Birds Seen on the Field Trip, May 15, 1960.—Pied-billed Grebe, Great Blue, Green, Black-crowned and Yellow-crowned Night Herons, Am. Bittern, Mallard, Gadwall, Pintail, Blue-winged Teal, Am. Widgeon, Shoveler, Wood Duck, Ringnecked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Ruddy Duck, Hooded and Red-breasted Mergansers, Cooper's, Red-tailed, Red-shouldered, Broad-winged, Swainson's, Marsh and Sparrow Hawks, Osprey, Bobwhite, Ring-necked Pheasant, Virginia Rail, Sora, Common Gallinule, Coot, Semipalmated Plover, Killdeer, Black-bellied Plover, Common Snipe, Upland Plover, Lesser Yellowlegs, Spotted, Solitary, Pectoral, White rumped, Least and Semipalmated Sandpipers, Dowitcher, Wilson's Phalarope, Herring Gull, Forster's, Common and Black Terns, Mourning Dove, Great Horned and Barred Owls, Common Nighthawk, Chimney Swift, Belted Kingfisher, Yellow-shafted Flicker, Pileated, Red-bellied, Red-headed, Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers, Eastern Kingbird, Great Crested, Yellow-bellied, Least and Olive-sided Flycatchers, Eastern Phoebe, Wood Pewee, Horned Lark, Tree, Bank, Rough-winged, Barn and Cliff Swallows, Purple Martin, Blue Jay, Common Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted and Red-breasted Nuthatches, House Wren, Long-billed and Short-billed Marsh Wrens, Mockingbird, Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Robin, Wood, Swainson's and Gray-cheeked Thrushes, Veery, Eastern Bluebird, Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Cedar Waxwing, Loggerhead Shrike, Starling, Yellow-throated, Solitary, Red-eyed and Warbling Vireos, Black-and-white, Prothonotary, Golden-winged, Blue-winged, Tennessee, Orange-crowned, Nashville, Parula, Yellow, Magnolia, Cape May, Black-throated Blue, Myrtle, Black-throated Green, Cerulean, Blackburnian, Chestnut-sided, Bay-breasted, Blackpoll, Palm, Mourning and Wilson's Warblers, Ovenbird, Northern and Louisiana Waterthrushes, Yellowthroat, Am. Redstart, Bobolink, Eastern and Western Meadowlarks, Yellowheaded and Redwinged Blackbirds, Baltimore Oriole, Common Grackle, Brownheaded Cowbird, Scarlet Tanager, Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Dickcissel, Am. Goldfinch, Rufous-sided Towhee, House, Savannah, Grasshopper, Vesper, Lark, Chipping, Clay-colored, Field, White-crowned, Gambel's, White-throated, Lincoln's, Swamp and Song Sparrows. Total, 159.

Additional birds seen Saturday, May 14: Double-crested Cormorant, Am. Golden Plover, Black-billed Cuckoo, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Hermit Thrush, Bell's and Philadelphia Vireos.

GENERAL NOTES

Mockingbird at Indianola.—All of us bird students look for unusual visitors to our bird feeders. Last winter we had two Purple Finches. We first noticed them on February 6, 1960, a male and female, and they were seen for some time after that. Robert McBride who lives in the northwest part of Indianola called me on January 14, 1960, and said a Mockingbird was eating at his bird feeder and also feeding on rose hips from a multiflora rose hedge. I saw and identified this Mockingbird on March 6. Mr. McBride also observed a Mockingbird at Lake Ahquabi 6 miles south of Indianola on March 1, 1960. Apparently these Mockingbirds wintered here. This species has been observed for the past two summers 6 miles southwest of Indianola and about 2 miles west of Lake Ahquabi.—PAUL LEAVERTON, 410 West Boston Street, Indianola, Iowa.

Brown Pelican Record near Des Moines.—April 26, 1959, a raw, cold, rainy day with a strong wind blowing, didn't appear to be a good birding day. Nevertheless we decided to drive to Brenton's Slough to look for water birds. We invited Dorothy Anderson to accompany us. When we arrived at Brenton's Slough, northwest of Des Moines, we were astonished to find a Brown Pelican on one of the ponds in the area. It flew from one pond to another during the two hours we were there. We watched with interest while the bird made its characteristic plunge into the water while feeding.

We had seen our first Brown Pelican at Savannah Beach, South Carolina, in September, 1958, and had enjoyed watching its interesting feeding habits. Only two previous records of the Brown Pelican in Iowa can be found, the last in 1900. We studied the bird carefully through a 20-power scope and 8-power binoculars. It was observed by many members of the Des Moines Audubon Society and was still present in the area May 2, 1959, the day of the spring bird count.

Other birds observed on April 26 included three Common Egrets, ten Willets and three Wilson's Snipes. On May 2 the number of Egrets had increased to five.—DR. AND MRS. HAROLD R. PEASLEY, 2001 Nash Drive, Des Moines, Iowa.

Horned Larks and Modern Machinery.—On May 28, 1960, while cultivating corn with the rotary hoe, I noticed one nest of a Horned Lark in time to pull around it and leave it undisturbed. During the same week I spotted two other lark nests while discing and circled around them also. These were second-brood nests, the first-brood nesting being generally completed in April here. Last year, in 1959, when it was necessary to disc up and replant some corn, we located three nests when discing. The nests had been constructed and the eggs laid during the 12-day period between planting and replanting.

By watching the ground a few feet away on the unworked side of the machine, the bird can be observed as it is quietly flushed from its nest as the tractor passes along side. Many times this is as near as 10 to 12 feet. One wonders how the Horned Larks can complete any nestings whatever in fields which are planted and cultivated on time. But the birds seem to thrive and maintain their numbers. There are some locations where they do have time to complete a nesting,—on fall-plowed ground which is not worked until planting time, on stalk fields on which the discing and plowing is delayed, and on ground after completion of small-grain seeding.

In former years, some nests might be located by the hills of young corn in the corn row and might not all be destroyed by the slowly moving horse cultivator. The modern rotary hoe, however, is a devilishly efficient machine for the destruction of bird nests by its hundreds of sharp prongs stab-

bing the ground every few inches as it moves across the field at a speed as fast as a horse could trot.—J. DONALD GILLASPEY, Lamoni, Iowa.

A Tama County Record of Henslow's Sparrow. On May 12, 1960, I was inspecting a small planting of pine on my farm land in south Tama County with Thomas Rittgers of Nevada, Iowa, and M. A. Ellerhoff of the State Conservation Commission. My attention was attracted to a small sparrow that alighted on a weed stalk about 35 feet away. When it raised its mandibles to the sky and emitted a weak "hiccough" in characteristic fashion, I immediately realized we were looking at a Henslow's Sparrow. I was familiar with its unusual song from the experience last year on the Hayden Prairie (Iowa Bird Life, Vol XXIX, No. 4, pp. 82-85) and from Peterson's "Field Guide to Bird Songs." This is probably the first sight record for this species reported for Tama County.

The tract where this Tama County record was made had been partly cultivated three years ago. It had been planted to pine and was consequently showing a lush growth of blue grass and weeds. While it did not present the appearance of a virgin prairie tract, the 3 or 4 acres did fit the description by Lynds Jones of Henslow's Sparrow habitats which he had observed many years ago in nearby Poweshiek County. Dr. Jones said this species might be found in "neglected fields and pasture lands."—J. HAROLD ENNIS, Cornell College, Mount Vernon, Iowa.

Notes on a South Dakota Trip.—We had an interesting, five-day auto trip to the Black Hills region over Memorial Day. Our party included the Paul Pierce family and the writer and wife.

On May 28 we attended the annual convention of the South Dakota Ornithologists' Union in Rapid City, South Dakota, and had the privilege of meeting many of the bird students of that state, several of whom expressed a desire to have a joint meeting with our Iowa Union. The program was very enjoyable, and to us one of the highlights was an instructive lecture on the snakes of South Dakota by the curator of the Reptile Gardens at Rapid City who brought along live specimens of all the species he described. The climax was when he dumped (from a sack) a large rattlesnake on the floor and demonstrated the proper methods of handling it.

The next two days were devoted to field trips in the Black Hills for the South Dakota members, but we took off on our own and revisited many of the places we had enjoyed on former trips. When we arrived at Devils Tower National Monument, in eastern Wyoming, we were surprised to see two men on the top of the huge monolith and 15 more climbing at various places on the east face. We learned that the mountain-climbing class of Casper College, Casper, Wyoming, was completing the final phase of this unusual course!

Due to heavy rainfall this year, eastern and central South Dakota showed an abundance of roadside ponds, even large lakes in fields, and wild ducks were everywhere. At Kodoka we found a colony of Burrowing Owls in a prairie dog town, and also saw an Avocet near there.—FRED J. PIERCE, Winthrop, Iowa.

WANTED—These issues of Iowa Bird Life to complete my set for binding: Dec., 1934 (Vol. IV, No. 4); Sept., 1937 (Vol. VII, No. 3); June, 1938 (Vol. 8, No. 2). Perhaps some of the members can supply them. I shall be glad to pay for them.—C. ESTHER COPP, Wheatland, Iowa.

The Editor of Iowa Bird Life has a few copies of "Nesting Birds of Iowa," by Thomas G. Scott and George O. Hendrickson, published at Iowa State College, in 1938. The booklet has 64 pages and 58 drawings of birds. The text is brief but well written. It will be sold at 75c a copy as long as the small supply lasts.